

Mr Charlesworth

"Who blessed mankind and humanised the world."

THE CHRISTIAN FREEMAN

AND

# Record of Unitarian Worthies

BEING A HISTORY OF THE UNITARIAN REFORMATION OF RELIGION IN EUROPE AND AMERICA  
DURING THE LAST THREE HUNDRED AND FIFTY YEARS.

With some Account of the most Notable Works written by Unitarians.

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## DECEMBER.

OUR Creator has taken care to remind us of the lapse of time. There is nothing we are more disposed to be prodigal of than time, and there is nothing we shall have more occasion to regret than wasted time. "Time is the stuff," says the sage, "of which life is made." Now, as we approach the close of another cycle of time, may we not with some profit ask ourselves how our time has been spent; and can we not even still improve the time? Have we mastered our vices, and largely increased and strengthened our virtues? There will surely come a day in which we will most solemnly take stock of our own lives, and the sooner we do this, the better at last will be our outlook and the more hopeful our account. Are there sins we have not yet repented of, are there duties we have still left undone? Are there sacred engagements we have carelessly attended to, and promises we have never kept? Are there not some opportunities of usefulness we have allowed to go by this year unimproved? There may be very much on which we can look back with pleasure, but it is better for us now to search and try our hearts, and to find if there be any wicked way in us, that we may reform, and be led in the way everlasting. There may be some things now in our daily life, we may call them incipient evils, they may grow and become huge offences, grievous sins. Let these remain no longer to be our ultimate ruin. Mortal life is blessed or cursed by timely thought about little things. Whoever waits to do great good things will spend a wasted life; and whoever fails to nip in the bud small sins, will never conquer the evils of large dimensions. Let us remember there is but one month left of this year, and in these few remain-

ing days we can still do something to efface past negligences. Have we not still before us many unfulfilled acts of goodness we have been all along resolving to do? Let them now be done. Let not the year close without the feeling we have redeemed the pledge of our best moments, that the self-sacrificing and generous deed should be performed. Never was there a month better suited for self-inspection than this month of the year, that a new year may be founded on the requited claims of the old. Maybe our hearts have lacked purity, our homes peacefulness, and our Church vitality; now by the help of God, let these evils no longer continue. We have been dependent on a Providence we may have almost forgotten, on a mercy we had seldom thought of with gratitude; but it shall no longer be so. We are spared, and we trust that there may be more years before us. They shall be better spent than the years gone by. No angel with snow white wings may at last hie us to Abraham's bosom; this is of small account, compared with the peaceful conscience we may have when our last day is come, if we have forsaken all our sins, and done our utmost in the love of God and man to form a higher life and make a better world.

## THE BRAVE LOVER.

IT is said that in the time of Cromwell a young soldier, for some offence, was condemned to die, and the time of his death was fixed "at the ringing of the Curfew." Naturally such a doom would be fearful and bitter to one in the years of his hope and pride, but to this unhappy youth death was doubly terrible, since he was soon to have been married to a beautiful young lady whom he had long loved. The lady, who loved him ardently in return, had



used her utmost efforts to avert his fate, pleading with the judges, and even with Cromwell himself, but all in vain. In her despair she tried to bribe the old sexton not to ring the bell, but she found that impossible. The preparations were completed. The officers of the law brought forth the prisoner, and waited, while the sun was setting for the signal from the distant bell tower. To the wonder of everybody, it did not ring! Only one human being at that moment knew the reason. The poor girl, half wild with the thought of her lover's peril, had rushed, unseen, up the winding stairs, and climbed the ladders into the belfry loft and seized the tongue of the bell. The old sexton was in his place, prompt to the fatal moment. He threw his weight upon the rope, and the bell, obedient to his practised hand, reeled and swung to and fro in the tower. But the brave girl kept her hold, and no sound issued from its metallic lips. She would not let go. At last the sexton went away. Old and deaf, he had not noticed that the Curfew gave no peal. The brave girl descended from the belfry, wounded and trembling. She hurried from the church to the place of execution. Cromwell was there, and was just sending to demand why the bell was silent:—

Slowly England's sun was setting o'er the hill-tops far away,  
Filling all the land with beauty at the close of one sad day,  
And the last rays kissed the forehead of a man and maiden fair,—  
He with footsteps slow and weary, she with sunny floating hair;  
He with bowed head, sad and thoughtful, she with lips all cold and white,  
Struggled to keep back the murmur,—  
"Curfew must not ring to-night."

"Sexton," Bessie's white lips faltered, pointing to the prison old,  
With its turrets tall and gloomy, with its walls dark, damp, and cold,  
"I've a lover in that prison, doomed this very night to die  
At the ringing of the Curfew, and no earthly help is nigh;  
Cromwell will not come till sunset," and her lips grew strangely white  
As she breathed the husky whisper,—  
"Curfew must not ring to-night."

"Bessie," calmly spoke the sexton, every word pierced her young heart  
Like the piercing of an arrow, like a deadly poisoned dart,  
"Long, long years I've rung the Curfew from that gloomy, shadowed tower;  
Every evening, just at sunset, it has told the twilight hour;  
I have done my duty ever, tried to do it just and right,  
Now I'm old I still must do it,  
Curfew it must ring to-night."

Wild her eyes and pale her features, stern and white her thoughtful brow,  
And within her secret bosom Bessie made a solemn vow.

She had listened while the judges read without a tear or sigh,  
"At the ringing of the Curfew, Basil Underwood must die."  
And her breath came fast and faster, and her eyes grew large and bright—  
In an undertone she murmured,—  
"Curfew must not ring to-night."

She with quick steps bounded forward, sprung within the old church door,  
Left the old man threading slowly paths so oft he'd trod before,  
Not one moment paused the maiden, but with eye and cheek aglow,  
Mounted up the gloomy tower, where the bell swung to and fro;  
And she climbed the dusty ladder on which fell no ray of light,  
Up and up,—her white lips saying,—  
"Curfew shall not ring to-night."

She has reached the topmost ladder, o'er her hangs the great dark bell;  
Awful is the gloom beneath her, like a pathway down to hell.  
Lo, the ponderous tongue is swinging, 'tis the hour of Curfew now,  
And the sight has chilled her bosom, stopped her breath and paled her brow.  
Shall she let it ring? No, never! Flash her eyes with sudden light,  
And she springs and grasps it firmly,—  
"Curfew shall not ring to-night."

Out she swung, far out, the city seemed a speck of light below,  
"Twixt heaven and earth her form suspended, as the bell swung to and fro,  
And the sexton at the bell-rope, old and deaf, heard not the bell,  
But he thought it still was ringing fair young Basil's funeral knell.  
Still the maiden clung most firmly, and with trembling lips and white,  
Said to hush her heart's wild beating,—  
"Curfew shall not ring to-night."

It was o'er, the bell ceased swaying, and the maiden stepped once more  
Firmly on the dark old ladder, where for many years before  
Human foot had not been planted. The brave deed that she had done  
Should be told long ages after, as the rays of setting sun  
Should illumine the sky with beauty; aged sires with heads of white,  
Long should tell the little children,—  
Curfew did not ring that night.

O'er the distant hills came Cromwell; Bessie sees him, and her brow,  
Full of hope and full of gladness, has no anxious traces now.  
At his feet she tells her story, shows her hands all bruised and torn;  
And her face so sweet and pleading, yet with sorrow pale and worn,  
Touched his heart with sudden pity, lit his eyes with misty light:  
"Go! your lover lives," said Cromwell,—  
"Curfew shall not ring to-night."



## COMMUNION.

BY J. T. TROWBRIDGE.

THERE is peace on the mountains,  
 There's joy in the glen.  
 For the Day which was buried  
 Has risen again :  
 At the dawn, in cloud-vestment  
 Too dazzling for sight,  
 Sits the calm, shining seraph,  
 The Angel of Light.

And the air and the perfume  
 Of Paradise, fanned  
 By invisible pinions,  
 Breathe over the land:  
 The lost glory of Eden  
 Is flooding the earth :  
 'Tis the youth of Creation,  
 The world at its birth !

Ethereal Sabbath!  
 Day evermore blest !  
 I will walk in my garden,  
 Enjoying they rest,  
 While the peal from the belfry  
 Is sweet on the air,  
 And the people are thronging  
 To sermon and prayer.

The churches invite me,  
 Their tables are spread  
 With the brightness of silver,  
 The whiteness of bread ;  
 The golden-lipped goblets  
 Are dusky with wine,  
 And I know the Communion  
 Of Christ is divine.

While to me the day's fulness  
 Of glory is given,  
 Round, perfect, refulgent,  
 Fresh coinage of Heaven,  
 New stamped with the image  
 And word of the Lord,  
 Shall not I to his service  
 My tribute accord ?

I scorn not, I seek not,  
 The wine and the bread,  
 Question not if the symbol  
 Be living or dead.  
 Christ speaks from the mountain,  
 Still walks on the sea ;  
 Yonder river is Jordan,  
 This lake, Galilee ;

Whoso leaveth transgression  
 Is cleansed by its flood ;  
 To love is his body,  
 To serve is his blood ;  
 Who walk with the humble,  
 The fallen lift up,  
 They sit at his supper  
 And drink of his cup.

I scorn not, I take not  
 The wine and the bread ;  
 In this temple of maples  
 His table is spread ;  
 He breaketh his blessing  
 And poureth his love ;  
 Upon bars of soft sun-light  
 Descendeth the Dove.

In this air, in these zephyrs,  
 This world at my feet,  
 I have found a communion  
 Most secret and sweet :

With the leaves and the ripples  
 My thoughts flow in tune ;  
 I am part of the roses  
 And breezes of June !

All the lightness and gladness  
 That gleam in the rest  
 Seem but sparks of the rapture  
 That burns in my breast ;  
 I flash in the brooklet,  
 I mount upon wings—  
 'Tis my soul in the sunbeam,  
 My spirit that sings.

And I dream of a Oneness  
 Pervading the whole ;  
 In all Nature, all nations,  
 The soul of each soul ;  
 One breath in all bosoms,  
 A mystical chain  
 Whose harmony makes us  
 All brothers again.

When wilt thou, dear Presence !  
 Whatever thy name  
 Pour out on the nations  
 Thy baptism of flame  
 (As thou pourest this sunshine),  
 And teach us to heed  
 The living communion  
 Of truth and of deed ?

Oh ! Love ! till thou make us  
 At peace with our kind,  
 And establish thy kingdom  
 In heart and in mind ;  
 Till thy will in our wishes  
 And actions be done,  
 Man gropeth in shadow  
 And waits for the sun.

He gropeth and creepeth,  
 With symbol and creed,  
 Till the Day of Salvation  
 Be risen indeed ;  
 Till the strong, Winged Seraph,  
 The Angel of Light,  
 Roll the stone of great Darkness  
 Away from the Night.

## TAKE ALL.

TAKE my life, and let it be  
 Consecrated, Lord, to thee.

Take my hands, and let them move  
 At the impulse of thy love.

Take my feet and let them be  
 Swift and beautiful for thee.

Take my voice, and let me sing  
 Always, only, for my King.

Take my moments and my days,  
 Let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Take my will, and make it thine ;  
 It shall be no longer mine.

Take my heart ; it is thine own !  
 It shall be thy royal throne.

Take my love ; my Lord I pour  
 At thy feet its treasure-store !

Take myself, and I will be,  
 Ever, only, all for thee !



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CHANGE OF ADDRESS.—All Letters to be sent to Rev. R. SPEARS, 19, Mornington Road, Bow Road, London.

THE VALUE OF THE BIBLE.—The reviewer of Conway's "Sacred Anthology" in the *New York Tribune*, probably Mr. George Ripley, shows that the compiler of this volume has rendered an excellent service to Christianity by making the superiority of its Scriptures very apparent. "No impartial reader can deny that even the most sublime speculations of the Oriental poets and thinkers have an air of mysticism and vagueness which, compared with the virile announcements of the Christian Scriptures, reminds one of the evanescent waves of the sea in contrast with the stability of the solid earth. In the one case we seem to repose under the shadow of the everlasting hills; in the other, to be tossed on the shining billows of the restless ocean. The perusal of this volume, accordingly, while it inspires a more comprehensive sense of the resources of the human mind in its searchings after divine truth, can scarcely fail to create a fresher and deeper impression of the supremacy of the Bible over the speculations of the schools."

**SELFISHNESS** —George Macdonald says :—"One thing is clear to me, that no indulgence of passion destroys the spiritual nature so much as respectable selfishness."

WISDOM JUSTIFIED OF HER CHILDREN.—Of the 2059 convicts sentenced to the Maine State Prison during its fifty years of existence, there has been but one clergyman, and so far as known, but one person who was a member of a Christian Church. Comments are needless.

CHARITY AT HOME.—A little boy was playing with a couple of pieces of money which a friend had given him, and putting his finger on one of them, he said, "This one I am going to give to the heathen;" and on the other, and said, "And this one I am going to buy candy with." He kept on playing, till at last one of the pieces rolled away, and he could not find it. "Which one have you lost?" "The one I was going to give to the heathen," replied the cherub.

GREATNESS AND GOODNESS.—Take goodness with the average intellectual power and compare it with mere greatness of intellect and social standing, and it is far the nobler quality ; and if God should offer me one of them, I would not hesitate which to choose. No, the greatest intellect which God ever bestowed I would not touch if I were bid to choose between that and the goodness of an average woman; I would scorn it and say, Give it to Lucifer; give me the better gift. When I say goodness is greater than greatness, I mean to say, it gives a deeper and serenest joy in the private heart, joins men more tenderly to one another, and more earnestly to God. I honour intellect, reason and understanding; I wish we took ten times more pains to cultivate them than we do. I honour greatness of mind—great reason, which intuitively sees truths, great laws, and the like; great understanding, which learns special laws and works its details; the understanding that masters things for use and beauty; that can marshal millions of men into an organisation that shall last for centuries. I once coveted such power, and am not wholly free from the madness of it yet. I see its use. I hope I am not ignorant of the joys of science and letters; I am not of the pursuit of these. I bow reverently before the men of genius, and sit gladly at their feet. But the man who sees justice and does it, who knows love and lives it, who has a great faith, and trusts in God—let him have a mind quite inferior, and culture quite a little,—I must yet honour and reverence that man far more than he who has the greatest power of intellect. I know that knowledge is power, and reverence it; but justice is a higher power, and love is a manlier power, and religion is a diviner power; each greater than the mightiest mind.—*Theodore Parker.*

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